

# A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Across the United States this year, the 50th anniversary of NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, is being commemorated with exhibits on the first moon landing, the first orbit of the Earth, the first photographs and data transmitted from other celestial bodies—amazing human and technical

feats that have inspired people around the world.

Not content to rest on its laurels, NASA successfully landed the *Phoenix* spacecraft on Mars and is preparing U.S. astronauts for a return to the moon. Americans are looking forward to undertaking new explorations of space with our international partners, including India.

Some may remember that we entered the space age together, too. November will mark the 45th anniversary of the first U.S. connection with India's space program, the launch of India's first sounding rocket, which probed atmospheric conditions. It was an American *Nike-Apache*, launched from Thumba in Kerala.

The anticipated launch of the *Chandrayaan-1*, with two NASA payloads aboard to collect data and map the resources of the moon, is the latest U.S.-India space link, but surely will not be the last. As Deepanjali Kakati writes in our cover story, "Exploring New Frontiers Together," India and the United States share important goals and interests in lunar exploration. The *Chandrayaan-1* mission has given our scientists and engineers a golden opportunity to work together on a project that promises benefits to both of our countries and to our global neighbors.

In this issue of SPAN, we are offering our readers "the moon and the stars," beautiful photos taken by NASA astronauts and instruments. We also hope you will find interesting the articles about how to look for life on Mars, survival on the moon, who owns the moon, NASA's next spacecraft and the work of UFO investigators.

Back here on Earth, a second group of articles focuses on what the rapid developments in media and communications mean for us. Thomas B. Edsall explores how these new technologies have changed U.S. politics, Chad Lorenz gives us a peek at what's next after "The Death of E-Mail" and Charles C. Mann warns "How Click Fraud Could Swallow the Internet."

Just to provide some moments of refreshment from the summer heat, we've opened this issue of SPAN with a splash: a Webchat with Olympic swimmer Janet Evans in "It's Not All About Winning" and Caroline Hsu's "Shorely, It's Paradise," a travelogue about magnificent Shi Shi Beach on the northwestern tip of the continental United States.

This summer, Americans are also thinking about the state of our country and the world as we prepare to vote in our quadrennial national elections. After a long season of primary elections and nominating caucuses, our major political parties have new leadership. During the Democratic and Republican national conventions this summer, Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain will be officially nominated as their respective parties' candidates for President. We have some basic information for you on the candidates, and on the elections for a new U.S. Congress.

On American Independence Day, July 4, the United States and India signed a revision of our bilateral agreement on educational exchanges, expanding the Fulbright program that has been in place since 1950. The agreement signed by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and Ambassador David C. Mulford at Hyderabad House in New Delhi will bring India into full partnership in the prestigious program, doubling the number of Indians and Americans that will benefit each year from the newly named Fulbright-Nehru Scholarships. Expanding our cooperation in education is of great importance to both our countries.